



Family Drug Courts Take Center Stage on Capitol Hill

NADCP Joins National Partners for Congressional Briefing

NADCP joined a host of leading national organizations today for a Congressional briefing on **Substance Use Disorders in Child Welfare: What Works for Children and Families**. The event was sponsored by the Senate Committee on Finance and the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth. Senate and House staff packed the event to learn about evidence-based solutions for children and families affected by substance abuse. Highlighted among the solutions was Family Drug Courts.

NADCP Board Member and Indiana Director of Court Services Mary Kay Hudson and Washington, D.C. Family Drug Court graduate Karen Christian spoke about the vital need for Family Drug Court support and expansion.

Karen told the audience of her long history of drug abuse that began when she was only thirteen. “I can tell you quite honestly, if there had not been a Drug Court available to me I would not be here speaking to you,” she said. “I would be dead. Not locked up, but dead. That was the path of destruction I was taking.” She went on to describe the process of going through Family Drug Court, the support she received and the tools she learned to make herself a better mom. After losing custody of her daughter shortly before entering the program she was able to earn it back. “My daughter is thriving,” she said. “She dances and runs track, gets A’s and B’s, has friends, hobbies, and dreams...I am able to look at my children every day and know that it is nothing short of a miracle that I am standing and have been given this second chance at life.”



Karen Christian tells her story to a rapt audience

Mary Kay Hudson educated Congressional staff on the disastrous effect of substance abuse on children and made the case for Family Drug Courts. “The correlation between parental substance abuse and child maltreatment is astounding. Studies show that between 60 percent and 80 percent of substantiated child abuse and neglect cases involve substance abuse by a custodial parent or guardian,” she said. “Without access to appropriate treatment, comprehensive case planning, and structured and frequent visitation, parents often struggle to comply with complex court orders... Family Drug Courts help stop children from being the victims of their parent’s or guardian’s substance abuse and can help break the cycle of generational addiction. Family Drug Courts have

been shown to outperform the traditional child welfare and dependency court systems in terms of protecting vulnerable children and rehabilitating and reuniting dysfunctional families.”



Mary Kay Hudson describes why Family Drug Courts are a critical investment

NADCP wishes to thank our outstanding partners for their leadership in combating the impact of substance abuse on children and families. For a complete list of national organizations involved with the briefing, [click here](#).

In addition, we wish to applaud the vision and commitment of this issue’s Congressional champions:

- **Senator Max Baucus (D-MT)**, Chair & **Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT)**, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance
- **Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY)** & **Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY)**
- **Rep. Karen Bass (CA-37th)**, Chair, Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth
- **Rep. Tim Ryan (OH-13th)**, Co-Chair, Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus